

Dual Credit Policy

Adopted June 10, 1999

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Introduction

Dual credit courses enable high school students to receive, simultaneously, both high school and college-level course credit. They provide high-performing high school students an affordable opportunity to experience high-quality college-level courses. Dual credit courses may be taught by full time college faculty who instruct high school students either on campus or in the high school via on-site instruction or interactive television. Dual credit courses may also be taught using the same modes of delivery by adjunct faculty who may teach part time both on the college campus and at the high school site. However, the large majority of dual credit courses are taught by high school faculty with supervision by on-campus college faculty. The policy guidelines described below apply only to dual credit general education courses offered in high schools by high school teachers to high school students. These guidelines do not address technically oriented dual credit courses offered by some colleges.

Over the past several years, there has been substantial growth and expansion of dual credit programs involving high school faculty with increases in the number of student credit hours generated and in the number of high school students, teachers, and schools participating in dual credit programs. Given this growth and expansion, the Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE) recognizes the necessity of revising its 1992 policy.

Statutory References

According to Section 167.223, RSMo (1990), public high schools, in cooperation with Missouri public community colleges and public or private four-year colleges and universities, may offer postsecondary course options to high school juniors and seniors. Section 167.223, RSMo, was amended in 1998 to expand eligibility for dual credit enrollment to high school freshmen and sophomores.

Guiding Principles

Dual credit courses achieve multiple purposes. The primary purpose of offering dual credit courses is to deliver high-quality college experiences to high-performing high school students. Dual credit courses are suitable to challenge students who have mastered or nearly mastered the complete high school curriculum and who require college-level coursework that is more rigorous than the high school curriculum. Dual credit courses also enrich and extend the high school curriculum, provide introductory college coursework, and avoid unnecessary duplication in coursework as students move from high school to college. Over time, as the technological means become more efficient in delivering dual credit courses from a distance, on-campus professors and instructors in the high school will be able to work even more closely as instructional collaborators in delivering college courses to high school students.

The policy guidelines described below were developed within the context of this stated purpose and apply only to dual credit general education courses offered in high schools, by high school teachers. These policy guidelines do not address technically oriented dual credit courses.

The policy guidelines for the delivery of dual credit courses denote quality standards that apply in most instances. However, there are instances in which the implementation of the standards may differ from the stated guidelines. For these instances, the institution must provide a rationale and plan to ensure the quality of the dual credit offering for these exceptions (see section on **Evidence for Policy Compliance**).

Student Eligibility

The eligibility of high school students to participate in dual credit courses may vary in accordance with the admission standards of the college or university offering the courses in the high school. For all institutions, however, students

must have a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or the equivalent and be recommended by the high school principal or his or her official designee.

High school students must also meet the same requirements for admission to individual courses (e.g., English or mathematics) as those required of on-campus students (e.g., ACT, ASSET, or other placement test scores). Specific placement tests may not be required for admission to some college courses; however, if the high school administers a competency assessment in an area related to the dual credit course, high school juniors and seniors must score at proficient or above on the MAP or achieve an equivalent score on a comparable assessment. Performance on the MAP or a related assessment test should be verified in the high school principal's or official designee's recommendation that the student participate in a dual credit course.

High school juniors and seniors who meet the above requirements will be eligible for dual credit courses. Under special circumstances, freshmen and sophomores with superior academic talents may take dual credit courses. Freshmen and sophomores must demonstrate their competency by scoring at the 90th percentile or above on the ACT or SAT. Moreover, the recommending high school counselor and the college academic department official must concur that a younger student can benefit from dual credit in the specific course and learn at the collegiate level.

Program Structure and Administration

Dual credit courses offered in high schools must duplicate the identical course offerings delivered on campus to matriculated students. Courses must be approved for dual credit status, and the credit awarded must be deemed acceptable in transfer by the faculty of the appropriate academic department (unit) of the college. Elements of the dual credit course to be approved by the on-campus college faculty in the appropriate academic discipline include the syllabus, textbook(s), teaching methodology, and student assessment strategies. Course content and course requirements must be comparable to those utilized in the equivalent on-campus courses with the same titles. The chief academic officer of the postsecondary institution will also be responsible for involving full time faculty in the discipline in the selection and evaluation of all dual credit faculty. The on-campus college faculty must also ensure comparable standards of evaluation.

Because discrete classes that totally separate dual credit from non-dual credit students may be prohibitive to operate in some cases, those classes with a mixed population must show evidence of collegiate level expectations for all students in the course. All high school students enrolled in a dual credit course must meet the same requirements for completion of the course, whether or not the student is simultaneously registered for college credit.

Students enrolled in dual credit classes must adhere to the dates comparable to those specified on the college campus for registration, drop, withdrawal, or refund.

[Clarifying comment: The intent of the policy is to prevent retroactive registration, a practice that permits students to choose whether to register for courses for college credit late in the semester. The policy is not intended to create logistical problems. On-campus and dual credit academic calendars should be comparable; program directors may exercise reasonable discretion with respect to registrations, payments, drops, withdrawals, and refunds.]

Students in dual credit courses must have geographic access to student and academic support similar to that accorded students on the college campus, including access to library resources of similar scope and magnitude as those available to students enrolled in courses with the same titles on the college campus. Library materials must be available either on site at the high school or through electronic means. Dual credit students must have reasonable access to the course instructor outside regular classroom hours either in person, via phone, and/or through other electronic means.

Institutions shall not use fees as a means of competing for dual credit students and shall work cooperatively when providing dual credit courses in the same geographic area. Institutions should use the same credit hour fee for all dual credit courses, regardless of the site.

[Clarifying comment: An institution's price for dual credit courses should be consistent from high school to high school. Actual costs may vary for a number of reasons. Quality controls should not be sacrificed in order to provide institutions with a competitive financial edge.]

The chief academic officer of the college or university, being responsible for the academic quality of courses delivered on the college campus, is also accountable for the implementation of this policy and for assuring the integrity and quality of all dual credit courses.

Faculty Qualifications and Support

As for any instructor of college-level courses, high school instructors of dual credit courses shall meet the requirements for faculty teaching in institutions of higher education, as stipulated for accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. High school instructors teaching general education courses shall have a master's degree that includes substantial study (a minimum of 18 semester hours) appropriate to the academic field in which they are teaching. However, institutions are permitted to use professional judgment in allowing faculty that do not meet all requirements for higher education instruction to teach dual credit courses provided that ninety percent of any institution's dual credit faculty meet the standard faculty eligibility requirements set forth above.

New dual credit instructors will participate in orientation activities provided by the college and/or academic department. Continuing dual credit instructors must participate in both the professional development and evaluation activities as those expected of adjunct faculty on the college campus. In order to assure comparability of the dual credit course with the corresponding experience on the college campus, college academic departments must provide instructors of dual credit courses with support services, including a designated on-campus faculty member to serve as a liaison. Dual credit instructors must be evaluated according to the college's evaluation policies for other part-time/adjunct faculty, with the recommendation for continuation being the responsibility of the campus academic department. Thus, the institution of higher education must provide on-site supervision and evaluation of the dual credit faculty. This process is best served when the instructional site is within a reasonable commuting distance from the institution of higher education.

Assessment of Student Performance

The responsibility for the development of assessment and evaluation measures to assure quality and comparability of dual credit courses resides with the on-campus college faculty in the appropriate academic discipline. In general, comparability between the dual credit course taught in the high school and the corresponding course taught on the college campus should be demonstrated by using the same methods of assessment or identical testing procedures and by employing the same means of evaluation, which will be supervised by the appropriate faculty on the college campus.

In atypical cases, when different tests are constructed and independent evaluations are performed by the high school teacher, the burden shifts to the institution to demonstrate the comparability of dual credit courses and to ensure a common standard of grading. The use of nationally normed instruments is recommended when the substance of the normed test is consistent with the learning objectives of the dual credit course. Locally developed assessments must be administered to both on-campus and dual credit students in order to provide the on-campus college faculty in the appropriate academic discipline with data appropriate to demonstrate comparability. Nonetheless, any specialized assessment of dual credit courses must emulate the on-campus institutional assessment plan required by the Higher Learning Commission, including the identification of the general education learning objectives and outcomes. Since the dual credit courses duplicate course offerings delivered on the college campus to matriculated students, both formative and summative assessment strategies and tools must be approved by the on-campus college faculty in the appropriate academic discipline. Annual reports of student performance must be submitted to the chief academic officer for both review and consideration with respect to the continuation of the dual credit instructor.

Transferability of Credit

Dual credit programs are not designed to replace a substantial segment of the academic experience on a college campus, but rather the programs are created to provide high-achieving high school students with opportunities for acceleration. High school students vary in their academic preparedness and in their capacity to complete collegiate-level work while in high school. The number of credit hours successfully completed by a high school student in dual credit programs will be related to her or his ability level. Since dual credit programs are predicated on the portability of transcribed college credit, the following guideline should anchor the decisions made by the high school student and the receiving institution: students receiving dual credit from institutions in compliance with these policy guidelines can expect to transfer credit up to the equivalent of five courses.

[Clarifying comment: Five courses shall be assured in transfer to all public institutions and independent/proprietary signatory institutions. "Equivalence of five courses" means five individual courses, regardless of the credit-hour value of those courses.]

Students who wish to transfer more than five dual credit courses should consult the institution of higher education to which they intend to transfer in order to determine if the institution has a policy regarding the acceptance of dual credit courses used for the completion of a college degree.

[Clarifying comment: All courses presented for transfer shall be evaluated based upon written transfer agreements in force among/between institutions. However, institutions shall be cognizant of the impact of their policy concerning courses above the assured five courses on articulated transfer agreements with other institutions. Institutions are encouraged to review their articulated transfer agreements' consistency with their dual credit policies. Dual credit courses shall be evaluated on the same basis as on-campus courses for the purposes of transfer. Each institution's dual credit acceptance policies shall be uniform. Institutional policies concerning dual credit should be applied equally to all institutions, including one's own institution.]

Students with dual credit transcribed courses who complete Associate of Arts (AA) degrees will be received in transfer the same as all AA degree transfer students.]

The receiving institution should not, however, impose any limits that preclude high school juniors and seniors from earning additional credit through regular summer and/or evening enrollment in college courses taught by college faculty as allowed by dual enrollment, early admissions, or other college programs such as articulation agreements, advanced placement, or other accepted means of testing or granting credit.

Credit earned by students in dual credit courses that meet the above guidelines shall fall under the same CBHE guidelines as that for credit in college courses subject to transfer between public and independent institutions in the state of Missouri. College credit earned through dual credit courses offered in high schools shall be applicable toward associate and/or baccalaureate degree requirements and shall be eligible for transfer. All student rights and responsibilities as outlined in the **CBHE's Credit Transfer Guidelines** shall apply. Institutions must publicize their policies related to the acceptance of dual credit beyond the equivalent of five courses.

Evidence for Policy Compliance

Each institution will provide evidence demonstrating that the policy guidelines for the delivery of dual credit programs offered in high schools have been implemented. The chief academic officer of each institution offering dual credit courses must provide evidence concerning the implementation of the dual credit policy guidelines stated above in the sections on Student Eligibility, Program Structure and Administration, Faculty Qualifications and Support, Assessment of Student Performance, and Transferability of Credit. The institution may provide additional information in support of the quality and comparability of the dual credit courses to the same course offerings on the college campus, especially as those data support institutional exceptions to any of the policy guidelines. The CBHE will provide an updated list of dual credit programs that are in compliance with the above policy that will be shared annually with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and other interested constituents.

In addition, all institutions offering dual credit courses are required to report annually to the CBHE such things as the number of sections offered; the number of students enrolled (duplicated headcount) per high school; the total by class (year in high school); the number of high schools served by dual credit and the number of sections in each; the student credit-hour production (total for all dual credit and total per high school); the number of sections offered in mathematics, science, social sciences, and humanities; and summary data on the performance of dual credit students. A format for the annual reports will be developed. Dual credit data will be submitted to the CBHE when the institution submits its annual Performance Indicators Report. These policy guidelines shall be reviewed by COTA after three years based on annual reports submitted by institutions and reports on the academic progress of students who transfer dual credit.